

## SUPERNATURALISM AND SATANISM IN CHATEAUBRIAND.

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(Concluded.)

THE Supernaturalism in Chateaubriand's works conveys no illusion to the reader; it impresses him rather as singularly unconvincing. It is felt as a study in style, for which the author, as a matter of fact, recommends it, in his Preface to *les Natchez*. With Chateaubriand, as with all pseudo-classicists, the Supernatural is used merely as mythological trappings, as a rhetorical device for the embellishment of epic poetry. He himself did not believe in his own Supernaturalism, as is sufficiently evident from his farewell to the Muse in the conclusion of *les Martyrs*, a conclusion which was suppressed in all editions subsequent to the first:

"Fidèle compagne de ma vie, en remontant dans les cieux, laisse-moi l'indépendance et la vertu. Qu'elles viennent ces Vierges austères, qu'elles viennent fermer pour moi le livre de la Poésie, et m'ouvrir les pages de l'Histoire. J'ai consacré l'âge des illusions à la riante peinture du mensonge: j'emploierai l'âge des regrets au tableau sévère de la vérité."<sup>70</sup>

This was the principal defect of Chateaubriand's Supernaturalism. Nodier, that schoolmaster of Romanticism, repeatedly said that two things were necessary for the successful treatment of the Supernatural in literature. The poet must himself believe what he says, and the reader must believe the poet. These two requirements are lacking in Chateaubriand's Christian Supernaturalism. Dante, Tasso, Milton and Klopstock addressed themselves to readers who believed in their Supernaturalism as firmly as they did

<sup>70</sup> "Faithful companion of my life, in ascending to Heaven, leave with me independence and virtue. May they come, these austere Virgins, may they come to close for me the book of Poesy, and to open for me the pages of History. I have consecrated the age of illusions to the portrayal of lies: I will employ the age of regrets to the severe tableau of truth."

themselves. But Chateaubriand had no belief himself and could expect none from his readers. A belief in the Supernatural was very far, indeed, from the spirit of the dechristianized France of the early nineteenth century. Most of the ideas of his day in this sphere of thought were quite different from the views that the contemporaries of his master Milton entertained. The tremendous belief in the personality of the Devil that had grown up during the Middle Ages flourished just as vigorously in the middle of the seventeenth century. Milton himself fully believed in the existence of the diabolical beings whom he described. He was as firm, although not as fantastic, a believer in a real, personal Devil, as Luther, who lived in a constant consciousness of contact and conflict with Satan. We never think of doubting Milton. "As well might we doubt the reality of those scorching fires of Hell that had left their marks on the face of Dante; or of the awful sights and sounds that beset Christian on his way through the Valley of the Shadow of Death." Even Christopher Marlowe, in telling the story of the bargain between Faustus and Mephistopheles, believed that he narrated established facts. The conception of the Devil of a Milton, a Bunyan, a Marlowe still represents the seriousness of the medieval fear of Satan. These men lived in an age of faith in which angels and demons were not abstract figures, but living realities. In the France of the year 1809, Heaven and Hell had lost their "local habitation," and angels and demons were considered as figments of the human imagination.

Nor is the subject matter of Chateaubriand so well fitted for supernatural action as is that of Milton. Even an unbeliever will suspend his own opinions and follow the supernatural interventions in the lives of biblical characters. But it is a different thing to inject into historical events Heaven and Hell and all the powers thereof. How incongruous must appear Erminius in connection with Constantine; and how much more ridiculous must sound a reference to Louis XIV from the lips of that allegorical demon Rumor, a daughter of Satan! In *les Natchez* the Supernatural was more out of tune than in *les Martyrs*. The earlier of the two romances dealt with events of less than two centuries ago and not a century from the time of writing. In the later romance, on the other hand, the Supernatural would have been perfectly proper if the author had treated it as the belief of the men and women of that day and not as his own belief. But he offered this "merveilleux chrétien" in full faith and forgot the fifteen hundred years that separated him from the characters of the story. The Supernatural

which is employed in the novels of the past and of the peasantry in the nineteenth century is presented as the point of view of the characters and not of the narrators. Chateaubriand, however, puts the interventions of Heaven and Hell on a parity with the historical events. His superhuman agents claim as much reality as his historical personages.

The fact that Chateaubriand employs the Supernatural as poetic paraphernalia makes matters worse. Even the non-believer is displeased to find a temple of religion transformed into a store-house of epic bric-à-brac,—to see sacred symbols used as poetic props and pulleys. This sort of marvellous machinery is as forbidding to men of taste as it is shocking to men of faith.

The further fact that *les Martyrs* is written in prose is prejudicial to its Supernaturalism. In Greek verse, in Latin verse, or even in Milton's English, as George Saintsbury says, we could put up with this marvellous material, but not in plain French prose.<sup>71</sup> Mme. de Staël had a clearer vision of the requirements of Supernaturalism in the literature of her day when she demanded verse for its treatment: "Il faut des vers," she wrote in her book, *De l'Allemagne*, "pour des choses merveilleuses." A demon who stalks in stately verse is endurable; one who talks in plain prose is wearisome. In Romanticism, which was primarily a school of poetry, the demon should have spoken in rhymed alexandrines. In the latter and prosaic half of the nineteenth century it was, of course, perfectly proper for the Devil to talk like the rest of us. Among his strong points is his adaptability to the morals and manners of each generation.

## VIII

Chateaubriand failed utterly in his efforts to bring back Christian Supernaturalism. His supernatural apparatus was as antiquated as his Christian epos. Even this "enchanteur," as our author was called by the frequenters of Mme. Pauline de Beaumont's salon at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, could not bring the world again under the dead hand of the past. He did not understand that an epic poem cannot be produced at will. It is the work not only of individuals, but of times and conditions. The age had long passed for the writing of epics. A Christian epos on the morrow of the French Revolution! His period was critical, analytical, and even somewhat cynical. His theories found no adherents, and his Christian epics no imitators. You will look in vain throughout the literature of the nineteenth century for a work which contains a medley of the "mer-

<sup>71</sup> *History of the French Novel* (2 vols., 1917-19), i. 30.

veilleux" in the manner of Chateaubriand. His contention that an artificial and rhetorical, a figurative and fictive Supernaturalism had in itself a poetic value and was necessary to the dignity of an epic poem, was disproved by his own works. His strictures upon a mechanical application of the "classical marvellous" were turned against his own exploitation of the "Christian marvellous." Chateaubriand's chief service lies in his unwitting application of the *coup de grâce* to the external conception of the Supernatural. He has proved that there is no intrinsic worth in mythological fictions, whether pagan or Christian. But his distinction between classical and Christian mythology would not hold water. He decreed the abolition of classical mythology, and literary history proves that he was wrong. The Supernatural, classical as well as Christian, was successfully used in the poetry of the Romantic period, but not as a stylistic embellishment. It was employed as subject-matter, and aimed to call forth a particular emotion in the reader. The symbolical Supernaturalism was especially in vogue during the past century. It adds to the intellectual emotion of a philosophical idea the esthetic emotion of a symbolical form.

Indeed, Chateaubriand himself admitted that his "merveilleux chrétien" was a failure. He knew that the supernatural passages were the weakest parts of *les Martyrs*, and realized that the merits of the work could not rest on its Heaven and Hell. "Neither the good nor the bad angels," he confessed, "will obtain mercy for the book." Its redeeming qualities he sought anywhere but in its marvellous machinery. The "merveilleux chrétien" is missing in his two short stories. The conflict of human passions in them is not overlaid by a contest of angels and demons. The religious emotion is nevertheless far better produced in them than in the greater works with all of their Christian marvels. The short pieces express very powerfully the Christian spirit. *Atala* and *René* have remained his masterpieces, while the more pretentious so-called epic poems, *les Natchez* and *les Martyrs*, were promptly forgotten.

Moreover, Chateaubriand's Christian Supernaturalism is Christian in name only. He committed the error of imitating too accurately the classical mythology in the Christian, so that they are almost identical. His angels are for the most part the Greek and Latin personifications of natural processes. Virgil's gods of the sea are turned into angels of the sea. Uriel, as the angel of love, is the Greek Eros, and Gabriel, as the messenger of the Lord, is Iris. Chateaubriand realized later,—too late, indeed,—that what he

offered was not a Christian Supernaturalism, but a caricatured classicism, that he had only modified the old epic features of the *Aeneid*, instead of filling his poem with a faith which Virgil lacked (*Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, iii. 15). His was too superficial a conception of the Supernatural. He knew too well that the "merveilleux chrétien" does not mean to a modern man the description of Heaven and Hell. The marvellous element of Christianity is the Christian conscience, as it manifests itself in our daily lives, the Christian soul, as it reveals itself in acts of self-denial. The habitation of the spirits of good and evil is not in Heaven and Hell but in our own hearts. The conflict between God and Satan is fought within and not without us.

Of Chateaubriand's Christian Supernaturalism all that remains is his Satanism. The interest in biblical and medieval subjects which our author awakened among the Romanticists was confined almost wholly to "diablerie." Certain passages in his books inspired a few of the most beautiful Satanistic works of modern times. Alfred de Vigny derived his poem, *Eloa* (1823), from Chateaubriand, and suggested on his part Lamartine's *la Chute d'un Ange* (1838), Gautier's *la Larme du diable* (1839) and Victor Hugo's posthumous *la Fin de Satan*. In Lamartine's poem, however, the angel who became a human being through love of a mortal woman, soon loses contact with his former friends and takes up his abode among men. Flaubert's *la Tentation de Saint-Antoine* (1849) and Anatole France's *Thaïs* (1890), go back to Chateaubriand's description of the Thebaid. Little did this "avocat poétique du Christianisme" dream that all his efforts in behalf of Christian Supernaturalism would turn out to be only a "boost" for Beelzebub. In one important respect, Chateaubriand experienced the fate of his master. Milton started out, in his poem, "to justify the ways of God to men" (*Par. Lost*, i. 26), and ended by conferring lustre upon Lucifer. His French imitator set out with the intention of rehabilitating Christianity in the arts and in literature, and his work redounded to the glory of Gehenna. Of all his Christian Supernaturals it is Satan who appealed most strongly to his contemporaries. In the Romantic period the Devil became an absorbing and alluring character and has dominated most literary forms down to the present day. To call the roll of the writers of the nineteenth century who celebrated Satan in verse and prose is to marshal the names of almost all the makers of modern French letters. If we admit that the nineteenth century literature reached its highest perfection in France, it should

not be overlooked that this is at least in some degree due to the skillful exploitation in it of the fascinating Prince of this World.

## IX

Chateaubriand's real Satanism must rather be sought apart from his Supernaturalism. The influence of Milton's Satan is not limited to Chateaubriand's spirit of darkness. It also extends to his human characters. Medieval legends inform us that persons who conjured up the Evil One often had trouble in parting with him when once he had answered their summons. Diabolus belongs to that genus of genii which, once having escaped from its bottle, refuses to return. Chateaubriand could not well rid himself of the Devil he had summoned. In vain did this Christian poet endeavor to paint his Satan in the blackest colors. The image of a bright and beautiful archangel would unfailingly emerge in a fascinating form and at the most unexpected junctures. The Miltonic Satan whom he so admired and whom he transplanted into his own literature and country, continued to be Chateaubriand's inspiration for the remainder of his life. Referring to the temptation scene, which was translated almost literally in the *Génie du Christianisme*, Sainte-Beuve asks:

"Ce démon, ce glorieux Lucifer, n'est-ce pas le même qui, avec tous les charmes de la séduction et sous un air de vague ennui, se glissant encore sous l'arbre d'Éden, a pris sa revanche en plus d'un endroit des scènes troublantes de Chateaubriand?" <sup>72</sup>

Satan dictated to our author many a phrase and fashioned many a figure more or less in his own image. The Devil is more cunning and crafty than this religionist was aware. The Evil One knows that humanity is on guard against him. To tempt man, Satan changes his name as well as his form.

The real Devil in *les Martyrs*, however, is not Satan or any other of the horned company that sit in the infernal parliament, but the wretched seducer and murderer of Velléda. Nor is Satan in *les Natchez* as much of a devil as René, the melancholy misanthropist, the social rebel and the unfeeling lover. René is the human incarnation of Milton's "great spirit inspired by melancholy." <sup>73</sup> A

<sup>72</sup> "Has not this glorious Lucifer, still gliding under the tree of Eden, with his charms of seduction and his air of vague ennui, taken his revenge in more than one passage of Chateaubriand?" *Causeries du lundi* (15 vols., 1851-62), ii. 157.

<sup>73</sup> Luther held that Satan was a mournful character and could in no way endure bright, cheerful music.



man solitary in his conscious superiority to his fellows, cursed with a mysterious sorrow wandering through many lands, vainly seeking happiness, is kin to the "grand solitaire désespéré" in Milton. How deeply Chateaubriand felt the melancholy of Milton's Satan may be seen from the following passage in his *Génie du Christianisme* (Pt. II, bk. iv., chap. 9):

"Satan repentant à la vue de la lumière qu'il hait parce qu'elle lui rappelle comme il fut élevé au-dessus d'elle, souhaitant ensuite d'avoir été créé dans un rang inférieur, puis s'endurcissant dans le crime par orgueil, par honte, par méfiance même de son caractère ambitieux; enfin, pour tout fruit de ses réflexions, et comme pour expier un moment de remords, se chargeant de l'empire du mal pendant toute une éternité: voilà, certes, si nous ne nous trompons, une des conceptions les plus pathétiques qui soient jamais sorties du cerveau d'un poète."<sup>74</sup>

His doubt and disquiet, his disillusionment and despondency, his disdain and defiance, his disordered soul and embittered heart, his mournful and morbid temperament, his rebellious and restless spirit, his unbounded egotism, his outward coldness and inward glow, his weariness of mind, his weakness of will, his hatred of life, all these qualities stamp René as a demon clad in human flesh. Indeed René is, as his creator tells us, "possédé, tourmenté par le démon de son cœur."

In the person of René, who stands at the very threshold of the new age, the Devil cast his long dark shadows over the weary nineteenth century. With this character begins the cult of sadness, the poetry of complaints. From René may be said to spring the melancholy and misanthropy of Romanticism, already dimly discerned in Rousseau's Saint-Preux and Goethe's Werther.<sup>75</sup> René is the personification of the diabolical malady of the century—*la maladie du siècle*. The priest d'Aureville, a brother of Barbey, well understood this diabolic quality of melancholy when he termed it "la grande diablerie." In René we find the first and fullest expression of that world-weariness or *Weltschmerz*, as the Germans call it, which is gnawing at the heart of modern man.

In René may be discovered, furthermore, the origin of the

<sup>74</sup> "Satan repenting when he beholds the light, which he hates because it reminds him how much more glorious was once his own condition; afterwards wishing that he had been created of an inferior rank; then hardening himself in guilt by pride, by shame, and by even mistrust of his ambitious character; finally, as the sole result of his reflections, and as if to atone for a transient remorse, taking upon himself the empire of evil throughout all eternity—this is certainly one of the most sublime conceptions that ever sprang from the imagination of a poet."

<sup>75</sup> Cf. P. Hainrich, *Werther und René* (Greifswald, 1921).

"révolté" who feels a voluptuous joy in standing out against the world, in warring with the cosmos, in breaking all bonds of family and society. It must not be forgotten that the Romantic idea in France, as later in England, was at bottom revolutionary. It differed considerably from the moonshiny sort of Romanticism that we find in Germany. In this respect the later school called "Young Germany" more nearly corresponds to French Romanticism. All the French Romantics were members of the Opposition. Chateaubriand himself, who began as a bulwark of Bourbonism, joined the Opposition in 1824, when he was dismissed from office.<sup>76</sup> It was on this occasion that he threw off the mask which he had until then worn. His counter-revolutionary ideas stood, as he himself admits in his *Congrès de Vérone* (1838), against his own judgment ("contre mes propres lumières"). What Blake said of Milton is equally true of his French disciple. He, too, was "of the Devil's party."

In the character of René, Chateaubriand is the first to paint the man-demon found among many Romantic authors and in a number of their best creations. He is a man who, conscious of his own powers and of the loftiness of his own aspirations, looks down with disdain upon the masses of his fellow-men who lack powers and aspirations equal to his. The keenness and depth of his own ideas and sufferings lift him in self-appraisal above the masses of his fellow-men whose ideas and sufferings are on a lower plane of thought and emotion. This man-demon, never finding his counterpart among men, must needs content himself with the love of a tender, but shallow, feminine nature. The personality of a woman of this sort he absorbs almost involuntarily and becomes the cause of her moral anguish. He accepts love without loving in return and feels no pity for the sufferings which he inflicts on the woman who loves him. That is why vital contact with such a demoniacal nature is dangerous to a woman and is certain to lead to a bitter conflict. This conflict between a man-demon and a woman-angel finds its most beautiful symbolical expression in Vigny's poem, *Eloa*.<sup>77</sup>

In the various aspects of his diabolical character René was imitated with many variations by the contemporaries of Chateaubriand. René sired the long procession of phantoms who struck terror into the heart of his own creator. Who can number all these sad and suffering, sentimental and sinning heroes of the Romantic

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Gustave Lanson, "la Défection de Chateaubriand," *Revue de Paris*, t. IV (1901), pp. 487-525.

<sup>77</sup> Demonic women of the type of Corinne and Lélia are few as compared with men.



School? Their name is legion: Obermann, Adolphe, Mardoche, Joseph Delorme, Antony, Didier, Hernani, Gilbert, Frank, Julien, Rastignac, and among women, Corinne and Lélia. They all call René father. Childe Harold also belongs to the progeny of Chateaubriand's hero. Manfred, too, as Chénedollé has aptly remarked, is but "a René dressed à la Shakespeare." It was Chateaubriand who created that Satanic character which is wrongly ascribed to Byron. Byronism was full blown in the work of Chateaubriand when Byron was still a school boy. The so-called Byronic pose was already assumed by René. Southey gave Byron too much credit in designating him as the coryphæus of the Satanic School. The laurels of Lucifer belong to the French poet. Chateaubriand, indeed, was the Sachem of Satanism rather than of Romanticism. What the Romanticists call the fascination of the Abyss is already contained in his writings. He poured the morbid virus into Romanticism. He developed in the Romantics the taste for the *malsain* and the *macabre*. From him they derived the tendency to gloat over decay and death. In Chateaubriand may already be discerned the prevailing traits of the Satanic School which is characterized by Brandes as "a school with a keen eye for all that is evil and terrible, a gloomy view of life, a tendency to rebellion," and "a wild longing for enjoyment, which satisfies itself by mingling the idea of death and destruction, a sort of Satanic frenzy, with what would otherwise be mild and natural feelings of enjoyment and happiness."<sup>78</sup> We need only point to Atala's dying speech with its Satanic lyricism or to René's letter to Céluta with its Satanic love of destruction and its sadistic lust for murder.

In Chateaubriand this Satanism received a Catholic coloring. He advocated a religion that should furnish occasion for esthetical joy and emotional pathos. He taught the Romantics that religion, far from being an obstacle in the way of sin, may, on the contrary, be found even an aid to the delight in sin. The horror of sin, he showed, added to the enjoyment of sin. It imparted to it a special flavor. This point of view is best illustrated by Stendhal's well-known story of the Italian lady who remarked one day: "Voilà un bon sorbet, néanmoins il serait meilleur s'il était un péché!" It is too bad that this good lady was not born a century later and in America.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>78</sup> *Op. cit.*, iii. 297; i. 39.

<sup>79</sup> A sherbet on the Continent contains alcohol. Professor Todd has called the present writer's attention to a similar story of a French lady who held up a glass of cool water with the remark: "How delightful it would be if it were only sinful to drink it!"

## X

Chateaubriand's Satanic influence reaches down to the present day. All our modern devil-worshippers have stolen their firebrands from his Hell. His Catholicism threw the decadents straight into the arms of the Devil. "Sentimentalism in religion," says Professor Guérard, "is ever a dangerous thing, but when it is intensified in literature, it leads straight to the Devil."<sup>80</sup> Barbey, Baudelaire and Huysmans were directly influenced by Chateaubriand. Their writings may be considered the natural offspring of his *Génie du Christianisme*. It is from this writer that Barbey and Baudelaire derived their Catholic Satanism: the belief in Satan as the most essential element in the Catholic creed. René and his progeny were already "Diaboliques," and there are passages in the works of Chateaubriand worthy to rank with the rankest "Fleurs du Mal." "Hath not the author of René," asks Anatole France, "also sown burning words throughout the world?" Through Chateaubriand, Baudelaire, that singer of Satan, found his admiration for the Miltonic archangel, than whom he could imagine none more perfect in manly beauty. ("On conçoit qu'il me serait difficile de ne pas conclure que le plus parfait type de Beauté virile est Satan,—à la manière de Milton.") Baudelaire's worship of Venus also goes back to Chateaubriand's description of this demon of Voluptuousness. In his essay on Wagner's *Tannhäuser* (1861), Baudelaire writes:

"The radiant ancient Venus, Aphrodite, born of white foam, has not imprudently traversed the horrible darkness of the Middle Ages. She has retired to the depths of a cavern, magnificently lighted by the fires that are not those of the Sun. In her descent under earth, Venus has come near to Hell's mouth, and she goes certainly to many abominable solemnities to render homage to the Arch-Demon, Prince of the Flesh and Lord of Sin."<sup>81</sup>

But in contrast to Baudelaire, who was an ascetic, even a monastic, sinner, Chateaubriand lived the part he portrayed. This religionist not only painted Diabolism, but also practised it. René was beyond a shadow of a doubt the image of his creator. Chateaubriand himself said that a man paints only his own heart in attributing it to another (*Génie*, Pt. II, bk. i., chap. 3). He also realized that the Satan in *Paradise Lost* is but a fallen Milton. He liked to put himself into all of his characters from Chactas to Aben-Hamet, but he was most pleased to portray himself in René. It is in this character, to whom he has given his second Christian name, that Chateaubriand, with a fearful but fascinating truthfulness, has con-

<sup>80</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

centrated most of his soul, of his life and of his experience. All of his characters are victims of melancholy, but René is the best projection of his *moi mélancolique*. In René may be seen Chateaubriand's misanthropy, vaingloriousness and arrogance, his aloofness of soul, his egotism grazing the incredible, his self-idolatry bordering on insanity. Even in his death he wished to resemble the Promethean Satan whom he admired and imitated all his life. He asked to be buried on the storm-tossed promontory rock of Grand Bé, separated even in death from the masses of his fellow-men.

It was Chateaubriand himself, this arch-sentimentalist, who posed as a man burdened with a mysterious and apparently causeless curse, dragging himself wearily from land to land and from continent to continent, with the mark of Cain on his brow, leaving everywhere misfortune in his trail. "I drag my weariness painfully after me all day long," he bitterly complains, "and gasp my life away." "J'ai le spleen," he wails, "véritable maladie, tristesse physique." He regarded the belief in happiness as a folly and sneered at the love of life as a mania. In his biography of Rancé, written but four years prior to his death, Chateaubriand still speaks of his passionate hatred of life ("la haine passionnée de la vie").

In René is also painted the nostalgic and nympholeptic Chateaubriand who has written the most intoxicating phrases on voluptuousness and death.<sup>82</sup> He revels in descriptions of fatal and carnal love, that of Chactas for Atala, of René for Céluta, and of Eudorus for Velléda. Such love between Eudorus and Cymodocée is finally illuminated with the halo of martyrdom. Chateaubriand's narration of this martyr's criminal adventures with Velléda in the presence of Cymodocée and her family was not necessary to account for the penitential severities imposed upon him by the Church.<sup>83</sup> Our author offers the psychological phenomenon of the delight obtained from treading on forbidden ground. The details of the physical union of Eudorus, this model of a martyr (another portrait of the author, by the way) with the distraught and wayward Gallican druidness given in the first edition of *les Martyrs* so shocked contemporaries that the paragraph was suppressed in subsequent editions.

<sup>81</sup> Not only the goddess of beauty, but also mortal women, famous for their beauty, such as Aspasia, Laïs, and Cleopatra, have, in consideration of this fact, been turned by the Catholic Church into demons, ladies of Hell. See also Heine's description of the Wild Army in his poem, *Atta Troll* (1842). "What glory for them!" exclaims Anatole France in *le Jardin d'Epicure*.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Jules Lemaitre, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

<sup>83</sup> This lack of tact is also noted in the author himself in the case of the English clergyman's daughter.

As a demonic lover, René is limned after the likeness of Chateaubriand, that eternal philanderer, as the late James Huneker called him.<sup>84</sup> This apologist of Christian morality and flower of orthodoxy was faithless to his own wife and engaged in a succession of intrigues with the wives of other men. It has taken volumes to tell of the love affairs which he carried on almost to the day of his death.<sup>85</sup> Chateaubriand was a votary of the beautiful Venus rather than of the beatific Virgin. The artist was converted, but the man remained the same. He remained René. Even if the author of the *Génie du Christianisme* changed his spots, he certainly never shed his skin. He may have professed Christianity, but he never practised it. Preaching the life of Jesus, he played the part of Don Juan. He followed the Prince of Pleasure rather than the Prince of Peace. The contemporaries of Chateaubriand were not blinded by his pretended piety. A vein of scepticism was surmised under the cover of his orthodoxy. "He hid his poison under the cloak of religious thought, and poisoned with the Host." ("Dans René Chateaubriand a caché le poison sous l'idée religieuse; c'est empoisonner dans une hostie.") This was the severe condemnation pronounced by his friend Chênédollé against the "restaurateur de la religion." Chateaubriand was never a believer and lacked the strength to remain a philosopher, just as he wished to be a Romantic and could not free himself from the fetters of pseudo-classicism. His brand of Catholicism was not in the least to the glory of God nor of His Saints. That is why this self-styled "Father of the Church" has not yet been admitted into the Catholic calendar. Perhaps the writer of this study, has unwittingly acted the part of the *advocatus Diaboli*.

<sup>84</sup> *The Pathos of Distance* (New York, 1913), pp. 311-19.

<sup>85</sup> A whole shelf might be filled with books on Chateaubriand the Charmer. See, among others, Francis Henry Gribble, *Chateaubriand and his Court of Women* (1909), and Dr. Portiquet, *Chateaubriand: l'anatomie de ses formes et ses amies* (1912). See also A. Bardoux, *Madame de Beaumont* (1884); *idem*, *Madame de Custine* (1888); *idem*, *Madame de Duras* (1898). Ch. de Robethon, *Chateaubriand et Madame de Custine* (1893); G. Mangras, et F. de Croze, *Delphine de Sabran, Madame de Custine* (1912); E. Biré, "Une amie de Chateaubriand: Madame Bayart," *le Correspondant* for 1901; G. Pailhès, *la Duchesse de Duras et Chateaubriand* (1910); A. Beaunier, *Trois amies de Chateaubriand* (P. de Beaumont, Mme. de Récamier, Hortense Allart) (1910); E. Sichel, "Pauline de Beaumont," *Nineteenth Century*, vol. LXXI (1912), pp. 1147-63.